[This transcript was created by LAI staff. It is as true a representation of the original as we could create. When a word was too difficult to decipher or was questionable we put those words in brackets. All text in brackets represents the voice of the transcriber rather than the voice of the letter writer. We have not maintained the spacing that exists in the original letters because that was not compliant with our accessibility standards. We are left justifying most lines.]

[citation information]
Collection title: Corcoran Gallery of Art and Corcoran College of Art + Design, Corcoran Gallery of Art directors' records
collection number: COR-0002-0-RG
Series 1: MacLeod, Barbarin and McGuire records
Subseries 1: Indexed correspondence
Box 2008-001
Folder 2: Letters 11-20

[Letter 11]

[Front of letter 11]
[Mr[s.?]. B. Fleming/26 May 1869/Offering “Patrick Henry”]
In blue pencil [Fleming]

[Letter 11]
29 May

Goochland Co: Ho.[Court House see below]
May 26th 1869

W.W. Corcoran Esqir [sic:Esquire]

Dear Sir,

I have in my possession the only likeness which was ever taken of Patrick Henry. Great Uncle to my husband, John Syme Henry Dec.[sic for Deceased?] which likeness was bequeathed by will to my Husband, it was taken by an eminent English Artist in M [illegible superscript letters maybe “or”] Henry’s Court dress, - It is in miniature form taken on Ivory and set in gold- about 2 ½ by 3 ½ inches in size, and oblong in shape. It is said by the family and others to be a remarkably excellent picture of the Original.

Of course the ordinary feelings of humanity would make it disagreeable to anyone to offer for sale a relic like this, but to be brief - And avoid trespassing on your time more than necessary - pecuniary reverses consequent upon the result, of the late War have left me no option, but render it necessary for me to sell for money regardless of my feelings & wishes,

whatever I can spare to pay debts and obtain such thing's as are absolutely necessary for myself & family. Thinking it would be an acquisition desirable for the National Art Gallery, "which" Your Munificence has lately bestowed upon the Government, I take the liberty of mentioning it to you, hoping you may think the trustees whom you may appoint could not better invest a part trust funds in their hands than in its purchase. Congress was very anxious some years ago to purchase it as a National Relic and offered a large sum of money for it through the Hon. Andrew Stevenson who was then U.S. Senator from our Congressional district. My husband declined the offer, wishing to preserve it as a family Relic from generation to generation. Every Engraveing [sic], likeness, & Sculpture that have been taken of Mr Henry were taken from this likeness. It seems to me that this ought still to be the wish of Congress. Because Mr Henry was the first to start the great contest for freedom the basis of our Country's present pride and strength. But to tender it as a donation though far more in accordance with my feelings, is as I have just said precluded by my circumstances. The time at which Congress, made the offer I just mentioned was during the session 33 & 34 just after my husband had loaned it to that body to have a copy taken for the Government, which copy was then placed in the Public National Gallery in Philadelphia. Reference to letters in my Possession. Evidence on oath, as to its History, & &, will be furnished if desired, the witnesses being parties well known in Virginia. Should you not wish to

[Back of letter 11]

purchase this likeness for yourself any aid you can give me in bringing this family relick [relic] to the notice of the Government will confer an everlasting kindness upon the aged Widow of one of Virginia's Son's in her distressed situation which will always be remembered with the deepest gratitude. We are strangers in your City, as I suppose all the old friends of my late Husband are dead or moved away. My son John S. Fleming is known to Gen"l [sic General?] R. H. Wrightman [Sen"r] [sic Senior?] & John M. Coyle son of Randolph Coyle from both of which families he received much kind assistance when a prisoner at Camp Chase. his constitution was so impared [sic impaired] by his long confinement, serious apprehensions are entertained of perminent [sic permanent] Consumption, he is just recovering from a very severe illness still confined to his bed. either of the above named families can give you any information you may desire as regards our family. Your earliest attention is solicited if convenient. Yours
Most Respectfully
Indiana B. Fleming.
Address. Goochland. Court House.

[Letter 12]

[Front of Letter 12]
Washington, June 3d 1869
[on a diagonal: [a[?]k illegible] June 4 [ans June9? illegible]

Dear Sir,

I perceive by the newspapers, that the Hon. W. W. Corcoran, accompanied his noble gift of his "Temple dedicated to Art," with the donation, also, of the rents etc, due by the Govt, for the rent, use etc, of that fine edifice as a fund towards the support of that Institution. Appreciating, in common with my fellow citizens, the magnitude of this gift, and the advantages it will confer on this, my native city, I beg leave to tender to you, and through you to the Board of Managers or Trustees, my services in making up the account, - preparing the proof, and pressing through the settlements of the claim for that rent, etc, before the Executive Departments, and if necessary, through the Court of Claims. My long experience in business of this kind, will, I think, commend my application to the favorable consideration of the Board; and if approved, it will

[Body of Letter 12]
afford me sincere pleasure to render those services gratuitously; as it is my earnest desire in this, the only way in my power, to give my small tribute towards carrying out the noble object of this gift.
Truly Yours
John Wilson

[Back of Letter 12]

In red ink: [(12)]
[illegible three letter word? Wilson
June 3. 1869
offering services, gratis]
[in blue ink: Wilcox]

[Letter 13]

Mesrs Belloni's 43 Pine St
New York June 4 /69

Sir.
I have here two gallery pictures which came to me from my uncles collection + which I wish to sell. One is "The Virgin Mary and St. Anna" by Blomarte [Bloemaert?] a panel picture 5 feet by 4 in the original oak [illegible word a[r]aed?] frame. The other "Perseus and Andromeda" by Albano [ie Francesco Albani?]. 3 by 2 ½ both in excellent order[?]. Can you oblige me by sending someone to look at them.
Yrs faithfully
Charles Lempriere
late Colonial Secr for Bahama

[Back of Letter 13]

[Chs Lempriere
June 4 69
Offering to sell Pictures]

[Letter 14]

[Back of Letter 14]

[A.B. Mullett June 5 1869
Acknowledgment]

[Front of Letter 14]

Engraved Heading in Gothic script: [Treasury Department.]
Engraved sub heading in Italic script: [Office of the Supervising Architect]
June 5 -h [engraved numerals: 186]9.

A. Hyde Esq. [ie Anthony Hyde secretary to Mr. Corcoran]
Secy. [sic Secretary] Board Trustees
Corcoran Art. Gallery

Sir:

Yours of the 4“ [ie th] informing me of my appointment as Architect (without compensation) is at hand. Please say to the Board that the compliment is highly appreciated and I shall be ready at any time when called on
Very Respectfully
A.B. Mullett

[Letter 15]

[Back of Letter 15]

[Anna M. Wilco[re?]
June 7. 1869
Offers to sell painting]

[Mr Hyde, [Ch?olitings illegible word?] of Miss Wilcox]

[Front Letter 15]

Washington June 7th. 1869

Mr Hyde.
My Dear Sir,
Many [health?] requ[illegible?] der or her [illegible?] to be in the country - It is my intention to break up house [keep?], and leave the City. I have a fine old painting - would Mr. Corcoran purchase it[?] or [.] [will?] take forty dollars for it - I am in need of the amount -
Respectfully
Anna M. Wilcox
[Please?] answer-
No. 220: 22nd St

[Letter 16]

[Back of Letter 16]

[J. or T.] P. Rossiter
June 8. 1869
Wants a studio in Art Bulg [ie Building]]
[Rossiter]

[Front Letter 16]

Cold Spring on Hudson
June 8th 1869.
On diagonal between superscript and subscript lines: [Ans 14th] [ie answered on June 14th]

My dear Mr Corcoran

Do you remember me once had a talk about a studio in your Art Building? I have long thought that I would like to spend my winters in Washington, and if I could serve the interests of art in any way connected with your Institution I should be pleased to hear from you.
Congratulating you on the

[Back Letter 16]

successful completion of your project so munificently carried out. I am with the highest esteem and regard
Yours most sincerely
[T. or J.] P. Rossiter

[Letter 17]

[Back of Letter 17]

[R.E. Smith
S Louis June 9. 1869
Offers pictures for sale]
[Smith]

[At bottom of page perhaps in pencil]

Formerly I am well known by Christopher Grammer Esq. of your city as Rapin E. Smith

[Front of Letter 17]

1421 Chambers Street
St. Louis. Mo.
June 9. /69.
[on a diagonal: June 14]

W.W. Corcoran Esq.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir

Observing your liberal donation for a “National Art Gallery” I am induced to offer you the remainder of a Collection of Magnificent Old Historical paintings, which have been in my possession over fourth [sic] of a Century, and Original paintings by John Quidor, who was a student with Henry Inman to the Celebrated Jarvis -- Inman remarked that Quidor possessed the best imagination as a historical painter than any other Artist in America.

The frames &c were burned in the great fire Of St. [Of St. is written over an erased word] Louis in 1849. --Subsequently other paintings were burned with the Steamer Illinois, while lying at New Orleans on their way to Havana: -- the

[Body of Letter 17]

remainder were stored in the Old Custom House here, until lately, when the person whose letters [sic] enclosed, desired to take them to Chicago; thinking he could establish a Gallery there; -- He expended considerable sums in advances, renovating and other expenses over $1500, for which he desires the Copy of the “Rape of the Sabines” after Rubens, -- I only mention this, to shew that they are not ordinary, and the value appreciated as per his letter &c.

In 1846, I was offered $2500 for the “Transfiguration” and declined. They are finer Specimens of the Fine Art than any I saw in the Capitol years ago.

The remainder still preserved are those as <u>per enclosed list</u>. -

Now, I propose, and wish to do this, I will have them shipped to you or such address in Washington as you may please to direct, and after a close inspection and examination, allow me whatever your magnanimous generosity may decide. -- It is all I have to depend on after a life of intense labor, misfortune, and ill health. -- In your possession, the paintings will be invaluable, for I assert with truthful Assurance, that they are not surpassed by anything of their dimensions and kind in this Country. -- Prosperity would have induced me to donate as you did: for reasons stated, it is otherwise.

Being destitute of present means, I will need $100 for expenses &c to go to Chicago, preferring to see and attend in person to their shipment, or if you do not like to do so, will have them forwarded as directed.

If you decline to accept my offer altogether, have the goodness to remit the enclosed letters &c to my address. Very truly, & Respectfully,
R.E. Smith.

[Back of Letter 18]

[Geo. A. Masile
June 9. 1869
offering Titian's "Crucifixion"]
[Masile]

[Front of Letter 18]
Wm. W. Corcoran Esqu [ie Esquire]
[on a diagonal 10 June]
Washington,
Sir,
In calling on you this morning, my object was to speak to you of a magnificent picture Titian's representing the "Crucifixion." It seems to have belonged to a convent of the time of the Reformation and has since then been in one and same [sic] noble family in Germany. An empoverished [sic] widow is the owner of that Titian, which she is compelled to sell for aiding in the education of two sons. That picture is well known to the German artists A European prejudice forbidding her to sell in the old country that last jewel of an ancient splendor, countess F. has found it advisable to send that work of the great master, the only one perhaps that exists in this country, to the United States. Whether she was not mistaken, remains to be seen

The great painter Kaulbach [ie Wilhelm Kaulbach probably] writes on that picture with great admiration, and speaks of it as an ornament to any gallery open to works of "Masters". He values that Titian at 20,000 to 30,000 gulden. What the Lady would take, I do not know..
[beginning of a letter form probably an "I"?]

I have no interest whatever in the affair, except one of charity.

Respectfully,
Geo. A. Masile

Washington, Patent Office..
Room 95.
June 9th. 1869..

[Letter 19]

[Back of Letter 19]

[National Academy of Design.
New York 23 June 1869
Congrats. Resolutions]
In blue ink: [Acad Design]

[Body of Letter 19]

From the Journal of the National Academy of Design

“The Council of the National Academy of Design congratulate the country and all lovers of Art on the munificent gift of -- Mr W. W. Corcoran to the city of Washington, the Capital of the Nation of an Art Gallery, with an endowment which cannot fail, judiciously applied, to advance the interests of the Arts throughout our land.

Therefore, Resolved - That we the Academy of Design will be happy to do all in our power to further the objects of this generous act”

A [line⁻ or live⁻?] extract
T. Addison Richards
Cor. Secretary [ie Corresponding Secretary]
NA

[Front of Letter 19]

[Engraved heading text in brackets]
[National Academy of Design,
New-York,] 23 June [engraved numerals: 186]9
[on a diagonal in ink: 26 June]

To WW Corcoran Esq
Dear Sir

By order of the Council of the National Academy of Design I have the honor to transmit to you the [2 illegible words?]-ing copy of congratulatory Resolutions, upon your munificent foundation of a public gallery of art in the city of Washington

with great respect
your obedient servant
T. Addison Richards
Cor. Secr [ie Corresponding Secretary]
NA.

[Letter 20]

[Back of Letter 20]

[C. W. Goudge
London July 10 1869
Offering Ben. West's picture
of the "Resurrection" for £2000]
[Goudge]

[Front of Letter 20]

London
44 Gerrard St Soho
July 10 1869
[in blue pencil on a diagonal: July 29]

W.W. Corcoran Esq
Sir
Having been recommended by Col Sanderson of the Langham Hotel London to write to you upon the following subject I beg to take the liberty of so doing & hope you will excuse me making this intrusion on your time. I am the owner of a very valuable picture painted by the late Benjamin West P.R.A. who was native of Philadelphia of which place as in others of the United States the extreme beauty of his works are justly appreciated let me beg you will allow me to introduce this picture to your

[Body of Letter 20]

notice it being one of extreme beauty & an exceeding fine production of this admirable master it is gallery size measuring 7 ½ feet high by 5 ½ feet broad the subject the 'Resurrection' figures are life size the very beautiful expression of the Saviours face is a marked feature in this work as also the surprising beauty of drawing & coloring of the Angel who has watch'd the tomb & is

startled by the sudden appearance of the Saviour it is a most effective & beautiful picture & I can say without the least hesitation it is one of the very finest works of

[Back of Letter 20]

Benjamin West - it is [suited?] for an Altar Piece or Public gallery & were it in America it would realize an enormous price - the amount I require for it is two thousand pounds -
Begging you will pardon me
for writing you
I am Sir
Your Obedient Servant
C. W. Goudge

PS Sir
This picture is for convenience on view at 59 Frith Street- Soho London